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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 BRASILIA 000351

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DEPARTMENT FOR D, WHA AND PM

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SUBJECT: SCENESETTER FOR THE VISIT OF MINISTER OF DEFENSE
NELSON JOBIM TO WASHINGTON

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Classified By: Ambassador Clifford Sobel

¶1. (C) Minister of Defense Nelson Jobim will travel to Norfolk and Washington from March 18-22, 2008 on a counterpart visit. He will meet with Secretary Gates in an office call on March 20 June. Minister Jobim,s objectives for the visit are to enhance prospects for bilateral cooperation and explore possibilities for access to U.S. defense technology.

¶2. (C) Summary: Minister Jobim is the first strong Minister of Defense in Brazil. He is working to centralize civilian oversight of the Brazilian military and hopes to learn from the U.S. military in this regard. He has also clearly indicated a desire to pursue military cooperation agreements despite objections from the Ministry for External Affairs, such as in the case of concluding a SOFA with France. He has also expressed his desire to pursue a Defense Cooperation Agreement with the U.S. and to have it approved directly by the President. Jobim has also been helpful in making progress on a General Security of Information Agreement, which requires approval by Brazil,s Ministry of Interior and Office for Institutional Security. Although the U.S. and Brazil share the basic goals of fostering hemispheric stability, preventing terrorist activity and strengthening international non-proliferation regimes, U.S.-Brazil cooperation is hindered by difficulties in completing a bilateral defense cooperation agreement, providing protections for U.S. personnel involved in training and joint exercises and taking proactive steps to address countries of proliferation concern such as Iran. Brazil has maintained its leadership role in the Haiti peacekeeping force MINUSTAH under the active advocacy of the Foreign Ministry. Jobim,s visit comes at an important time as Brazil is formulating a new National Defense Strategy and beginning to make decisions about acquisition of new military systems and technology. Other military issues of interest include service relations with the fledgling civilian defense ministry and the necessity of negotiating further agreements with the U.S. in order to enhance our already strong military-to-military relationship. End Summary.

Politico-Economic Overview

¶3. (SBU) President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva was elected in 2002 in large part on promises of promoting an ambitious social agenda, including generous handouts to the poor. On the strength of the popularity of these measures, he was re-elected in 2006, although with diminished support from the middle class. The public's top concerns - crime and public security - have not improved under this administration. The Lula Administration has been beset by a grave political crisis as interlocking influence peddling/vote-buying scandals plagued elements of Lula's PT party, but the President's personal popularity has not suffered, even after many of his closest associates have been caught in corrupt practices. MOD Jobim is perhaps among the most trusted leaders in Brazil. A former Supreme Court Justice, he maintains a strong reputation for integrity that is rare among Brazil's leadership.

Friendly Cooperation, But Not Strong Friendship

¶4. (C) Brazil's democratic institutions are strong and stable after more than 20 years of civilian rule. A return to military dictatorship is today unthinkable as Brazil's armed forces pursue a professional non-political identity. With steady export-led economic growth having become the norm in the recent past, Brazil has been a supporter of reasoned foreign policy goals and has been steadfast in its support of democracy in the hemisphere. It has a strong interest in hemispheric security issues that largely mirrors our own, and actively cooperates with us on the operational level in the fight against terrorism.

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¶5. (C) While relations between the U.S. and Brazil are generally friendly, often the USG encounters major difficulties in gaining the cooperation of senior policymakers on issues of significant interest to the United States. The difficulty is most apparent in the Ministry for External Affairs (MRE) which maintains an anti-American slant and has tried to block improved DoD-MOD relations. In planning for Jobim's visit, the MRE actively campaigned to limit Jobim's time in Washington to one largely ceremonial day with little substance.

¶6. (C) The current left-of-center administration has studiously avoided close cooperation on pol-mil issues important to us and has kept us at arms length on most security-related issues. Specifically, the MRE has dragged its feet on completing a Defense Cooperation Agreement, General Security of Military Information Agreement (GSOMIA), Acquisition and Cross Servicing Agreement (ACSA) or Article 98 agreement. The GOB traditionally maintained that such agreements, particularly the SOFA, were against Brazilian law, but reversed itself (over MRE objections) and signed a SOFA with France earlier this year. We are exploring the possibility of using the French SOFA as a starting place for a U.S.-Brazil agreement.

¶7. (C) Brazil has stayed the course as leader of MINUSTAH in Haiti despite a lack of domestic support for the PKO. The MRE has remained committed to the initiative because it believes that the operation serves FM Amorim's obsessive international goal of qualifying Brazil for a seat on the UN Security Council. The Brazilian military remains committed as well, because the mission enhances its international prestige and provides training and operational opportunities. So far, President Lula has backed the Foreign Ministry's position, and Brazil will likely continue to provide leadership and troops to MINUSTAH for the conceivable future.

Despite the success of the MINUSTAH deployment, Brazil has not shown any interest in undertaking further peacekeeping operations, although Brazilian contributions to UN operations in such places as Darfur have been requested.

CT and Non-Proliferation

¶8. (C) The desire not to be identified with the U.S. is borne out as well in the GOB's approach to counterterrorism. Cooperation remains excellent at the operational level, especially between law enforcement agencies. However, the GOB political leadership has refused to endorse U.S. counterterrorism initiatives publicly and has insisted that official communiques of the 3 1 mechanism note that there is no evidence of terrorist operations in the Tri-Border area, where Brazil, Paraguay and Argentina meet. Wary of its large, prosperous and influential Arab population, the GOB makes every effort to downplay in public even the possibility of terrorist fund-raising going on inside Brazil.

¶9. (C) The GOB has a good record in non-proliferation efforts, but has been slow to join international consensus in favor of sanctions on Iran. Brazil has also not yet signed the NPT Additional Protocol, although it has not ruled out signing it in the near future.

Military Issues

¶10. (C) Brazil established a Ministry of Defense (MoD) for the first time in June 1999, uniting the three services (Army, Navy, and Air Force) under a single minister. Jobim became Minister last year when the disastrous crash of a Brazilian airliner highlighted weaknesses in the civil aviation system, which comes under MOD purview. Organizationally, the MOD still faces challenges managing the individual services. Each service is still fairly autonomous and controls its own budget and acquisition programs. In addition, the Lula administration's focus on social reforms

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and programs has meant decreases for military budgets, leading to fewer training opportunities and equipment purchases. This situation is changing as there is now near consensus among Brazil's leadership that the military is under-resourced and under equipped to accomplish its missions.

¶11. (C) To address this situation, the Lula government has tasked a new National Defense strategy to be completed by this fall. This paper will set the framework for military modernization and theoretically drive decisions on acquisition of new equipment. In reality, such decisions will be made largely for political and economic reasons. Brazil's defense industrial base has atrophied since the end of the Cold War, and it is a major objective of the government to reinvigorate it. Decisions on major systems will be influenced much more by access to foreign technology and opportunities for Brazilian industry than by the capabilities such systems will add to Brazil's military.

General Points to Make

¶18. (SBU) Our core message for Jobim's visit should be:

-- Reinforcing and underscoring the importance of these agreements in support of Brazil's interest to reequip and modernize its military with technology transfer is critically important. It would also help to define how we, the anchor of the North America, and Brazil the anchor of South America, may be able to work more closely in the future to enhance hemispheric defense cooperation.

We recommend SecDef also emphasize the following points in conversations with Minister Jobim:

-- We want to continue improving our defense relationship. This is an imperative, given the difficult global security situation in which we live today, and the importance of Brazil,s role in the Americas.

-- We are serious about our partnership in Brazil. We see strong possibilities for joint research and production, exchanges of military personnel and training.

-- As you make important decisions about the modernization of Brazil,s forces later this year, keep in mind that partnership with the U.S. can help both our countries realize our common goal of preserving stability in the Western Hemisphere.

-- As we continue to develop our partnership, we need to have in place several standard documents to assure smooth cooperation. The Defense Cooperation Agreement is the first of these. We understand your Ministry has approved the current draft and hope the rest of your government will also. Next, we hope to complete an agreement on information security and a Status of Forces Agreement to protect the forces of both countries during joint exercises.

-- The United States would like to congratulate Brazil for its efforts in Haiti. The improving situation there is in no small measure due to the professionalism and dedication of Brazilian troops and leadership. We hope Brazil is resolved to continue to contribute to the success of MINUSTAH.

SOBEL